

Memphis Animal Shelter Advisory Board

Open meeting

January 14, 2015

Present: Dr. Stephen Tower, Chairman; Taurus Bailey, member; Jill Madajczyk, member; Jeanne Chancellor, Secretary; James Rogers, Director Memphis Animal Services; Jake Hayes, City Attorney's Office

The meeting was opened by Dr. Tower.

Mr. Rogers presented a Power Point presentation highlighting activities at the Shelter the past quarter.

Highlights were: Channel 3 dogs of the month are on tv the first Monday of the month. Cock fighting fowl have been confiscated. A MegaMatchAthon was held in October. The event was funded by a \$5,000 grant from the ASPCA. The goal was to adopt 120 animals, and 53 were adopted. All animals for the event were required to be spayed/neutered and ready to go home. This goal was not met by the clinic, but 53 were adopted.

Mr. Rogers reported that in August and October 500 animals were released alive.

The final statistics for 2014 were: Intake 11,754, Euthanasia 5853 and live releases 5265.

Dr. Tower asked for the census number. Mr. Rogers reported that 15 animals were missing at the end of December. The statistics in January will start with zero and the current missing animals will be removed from the count so the year starts off at zero. The animals will not be removed from the system, but will be removed from the missing starting in January, 2015.

Mr. Rogers brought euthanasia logs for the Board to review.

Mr. Rogers was asked by the Board about the air filtration system in the Shelter. He reported that there are 60 filters that handle the kennel areas and 20-25 filters that handle the lobby areas. He stated that the kennel filters are changed every 45 days the lobby filters changed every 90 days. A custodial crew from the City changes the Kennel filters and shelter personnel change the lobby area filters.

Cindy Sanders presented photographs of clogged air return vents throughout the kennel areas. Mr. Rogers said he was not aware of this, and he would have it cleaned immediately.

Euthanasia on the Review Date was brought up by Jeanne Chancellor. She expressed the opinion that every animal deserves a chance at adoption. Holding animals at least a day past the review date would at least give the animal a chance at adoption on that day. Mr. Rogers said he would consider the proposal again, but the public had to understand that he has to maintain the Shelter population in a healthy manner.

Dr. Towers reported that there are open positions on the Board, and if anyone present knew anyone who would like to apply for a position on the Board the applications would be considered. The members are appointed by the Mayor.

Mr. Rogers introduced Ms. Tunstall as the new Operations Manager. He also introduced Jake Hayes as the new representative from the City Attorney's Office.

Taurus Bailey asked for an update on how the Shelter is presented to the public through Social Media, web presence, and press. Mr. Rogers responded that the pets are posted on PetHarbor, Friends of the Memphis Animal Shelter maintains a Facebook page, Memphis Pets Alive takes pictures also of the pets in the Shelter. The City maintains a website through the City website. Mr. Bailey stated that he believed the City could do a better job presenting the Shelter to the public especially through the City website.

Taurus Bailey asked about the availability of animals to the public. He had an experience that made it seem rescue groups were taking very adoptable dogs that should be available to the public first. Mr. Rogers stated he would check into the situation, but the policy is that the public gets first chance at adoption.

The meeting was opened to the public:

Sylvia Cox asked: Want to ask about employee discipline and accountability. She asked how much training was it going to take before the clerical errors would stop that cause animals to be euthanized due to lack of entries into the shelter computer system. Mr. Rogers stated that they were constantly working to improve the system. The public needs to understand that the clerks are human and humans make mistakes. Ms. Cox stated that the public needs to trust the shelter, and that will not happen as long as these mistakes keep happening. No amount of training seems to make a difference. Mr. Rogers stated he is doing all he can to correct the mistakes.

Cindy Sanders and Jackie Johns questioned the absence of Animal Control Officers in court. Ms. Sanders asked what the protocol is for Animal Control Officers showing up in Court. Mr. Rogers replied that the Officers are required to be in Court when they are called. Ms. Sanders stated that on January 14, 2015 Animal Control Officers were not in Court for cases in the afternoon and the cases had to be rescheduled. Mr. Rogers stated that he would check into the matter and get back to Ms. Sanders. Mr. Bailey stated that Ms. Sanders could check with the DA's Office. Ms. Sanders replied that absent Animal Control Officers in Division 14 Court is a constant problem. Taurus Bailey stated that cases requiring the Animal Control Officers may be able to be scheduled first. Jill Madajczyk asked what happens to Officers who are absent from court. Mr. Rogers stated he would check, and let the Board know at the next meeting.

Jan Courtney asked what information customers are given when surrendering an animal. Mr. Rogers stated that the public is informed that the pet becomes immediate property of the City when the papers are signed and that the pet could possibly be euthanized. He stated that the Shelter tries to help people surrendering animals. He stated that food is offered if the reason stated is that the person cannot afford food, and spay/neuter is offered if the public needs that service to keep the pet. Jeanne Chancellor stated that Friends of the Memphis Animal Shelter helps with these services if needed. It is not the City.

Linda Baxter asked about the minutes that have not been posted since Feb, 2014. Who is responsible for these documents? It was explained that there has not been a quorum at many meetings so minutes have not been approved. As soon as the minutes are approved they are turned into the City who is responsible to posting the minutes. Ms. Baxter also asked about the number of cages available for cats and dogs. She asked the number of empty cages required at all times. Why euthanize when empty cages? Taurus Bailey also asked what constitutes cages full and the need for euthanasia. Mr. Rogers said that there are dynamics in the shelter constantly changing. He stated no one knows on a given day how many animals will come in. There has to be space for incoming animals. Mr. Rogers stated that the attendees would not understand how the number is figured. Jeanne Chancellor brought up the fact that there are many many cages full of animals waiting for surgery which is clogging up the system. Animals are being euthanized due to the space constraints being caused by the surgery backlog. Mr. Tower stated that the number one reason given for changing the hours was to improve the services of the clinic which does not seem to have happened.

Jan Champagne asked: Why aren't rescue groups or people helping with rescue groups allowed to intercept owners that are surrendering their pets in a non-confrontational manner in order to help keep MAS from having to euthanize pets for space or time. Mr. Rogers stated that people need to be able to surrender their pets without interference from the public. It is often a difficult decision, and they should not be made to feel bad about the decision.

Paula Lutz: Since October's meeting when you mentioned that some of your staff has received customer service training, why are the phones still not answered during work hours? What kind of training have the employees received since Oct? Mr. Rogers stated that the phones get backlogged from more calls coming in that there are clerks to answer. He said there had been some trouble with the phones but that it should have been resolved. Mr. Rogers stated that there had been no training since October, but during September and October the clerical staff had received phone etiquette training. Mr. Rogers stated that in 2015 the Supervisory Staff would attend TCAP training. Dr. Coleman is attending a veterinary conference in January. Jeanne Chancellor asked if there would be relief vet help during that time. Mr. Rogers stated that none were scheduled. Dr. Tower offered a veterinarian who could come help. Mr. Rogers stated he would be in touch with Dr. Tower to get the vet's information

Karen Kessler: When you euthanize large breed dogs, does the sedative have enough time to get into their system to be effective in "humanely" euthanizing them? Mr. Rogers stated that most dogs are not sedated before euthanasia. There have probably been 3 animals given sedation in the past 30 days. Taurus Bailey asked if the euthanasia drug and process is painful to the animal. Dr. Tower stated that the drug is a shock to the dog's system. He felt it is much more humane to sedate, and the board has recommended this many times. Cats are not subjected to the same shock as the solution is not injected in a vein. Dr. Tower also said that there is less chance of mishandling of the animals if they are sedated first. He stated that the medications available for use by euthanasia technicians are not adequate for complete sedation. Dr. Tower stated he is going to research what can be done with the various medications available.

Jill Madajczyk made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jeanne Chancellor.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanne Chancellor, Secretary